

[REDACTED]

DIST: 20 SEPT 82

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DOMESTIC COLLECTION DIVISION

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE
REPORT CLASS [REDACTED]

COUNTRY: USSR
SUBJECT: USE OF PRISON LABOR IN KOMI ASSR FOR FOREST CLEARING
AND IN SAWMILLS (DOI: 1971-1973)

REF: [REDACTED]
SOURCE: [REDACTED]

Approved for Release
Date

21 MAR 1987

[REDACTED]

1. DURING THE PERIOD 1971-1973 THE KOMI ASSR WAS A MAJOR CENTER OF PRISON CAMPS. MOST OF THE TERRITORY OF THE ASSR WAS COVERED WITH TAIGA AND A LARGE NUMBER OF CAMPS, PROBABLY MORE THAN 100, WERE SITUATED DEEP IN THE TAIGA. CRIMINAL SENTRY GUARDS REGIMENT NUMBER 581, WHICH WAS HEADQUARTERED TO THE SOUTH OF THE KOMI ASSR IN THE CITY OF KIROV, CONSISTED OF CRIMINAL SENTRY GUARD COMPANIES WHOSE MEN SERVED AS GUARDS AT PERHAPS 10-20 PRISON CAMPS IN THE KOMI ASSR. [REDACTED] COMMENT: SOURCE COULD NOT RECALL THE PRECISE LOCATIONS OF ANY OF THE CAMPS BUT BELIEVED MOST OF THEM WERE IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE ASSR. HE BASED THIS BELIEF ON THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE OFFICERS MADE DAILY TRIPS FROM HEADQUARTERS IN KIROV TO THE CAMPS WHICH THE UNITS GUARDED.]

2. THE CAMPS RANGED IN SIZE FROM APPROXIMATELY 1,000 PRISONERS TO APPROXIMATELY 4,000 PRISONERS. ALL OF THE PRISONERS WERE COMMON CRIMINALS; THERE WERE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS AMONG THEM. THE PRISONERS IN ALL OF THE CAMPS WORKED IN ONE ASPECT OR ANOTHER OF THE FORESTRY AND WOODWORKING INDUSTRY. THE VARIATIONS IN THE SIZES OF THE CAMPS CORRESPONDED BOTH TO THE DEGREE OF SECURITY (REZHIM) IN FORCE AND TO THE NATURE OF THE LABOR WHICH THE PRISONERS PERFORMED. THE LARGER CAMPS WERE THE MORE SECURE, AND THE PRISONERS AT THEM PERFORMED LABOR DETAILS WHICH REQUIRED RELATIVELY CLOSE SUPERVISION BOTH BY GUARDS AND BY FOREMEN, SUCH AS OPERATING SAWS AND OTHER MACHINERY IN SAWMILLS AND PLYWOOD PLANTS. THE PRISONERS IN THE SMALLER CAMPS, ON THE OTHER HAND, PERFORMED LABOR DETAILS WHICH ENABLED THEM TO MOVE ABOUT WITH A RELATIVELY GREATER DEGREE OF FREEDOM. THESE DETAILS, SUCH AS THE INITIAL CLEARING OF FORESTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOGGING ROADS, WERE EXTREMELY DEMANDING PHYSICALLY. [REDACTED] COMMENT: IT WOULD BE FAIR TO CHARACTERIZE ALL OF THE LABOR DETAILS AS "DIRTY WORK," IN THE SENSE THAT THEY CONSISTED OF THINGS WHICH FREE, HIRED LABORERS DID NOT LIKE TO DO. BUT THE "DIRTIEST" WORK BY FAR WAS THAT PERFORMED BY PRISONERS WITHOUT CLOSE SUPERVISION BY GUARDS OR FOREMEN.]

3. NONE OF THE PRISONERS IN THE CAMPS GUARDED BY THE MEN IN REGIMENT NUMBER 581 WORKED ON OIL, GAS OR OTHER PIPELINES DURING THE YEARS 1971-1973. SIMILARLY, THERE WERE NO RUMORS AMONG THE SOLDIERS OF THE 581ST REGIMENT ABOUT PIPELINE WORK PERFORMED BY PRISONERS, WHETHER IN THE KOMI ASSR OR ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, SEVERAL UNIDENTIFIED OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT TOLD THE MEN THAT DURING THE 1960'S THEY HAD GUARDED PRISONERS WHO HAD PERFORMED ALL OF THE INITIAL WORK ON THE ABAKAN-TAYSHET RAILROAD IN THE BURYAT ASSR. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THIS WAS TYPICAL OF THE "DIRTIEST" WORK THAT PRISONERS HAD TO PERFORM. (FIELD COMMENT: SOURCE COULD NOT SPECULATE ABOUT A CONNECTION, IF ANY, BETWEEN THIS RAILROAD AND ENERGY RESOURCES. HOWEVER, HE HAD FORMED THE BELIEF THAT ITS PRINCIPAL PURPOSE WAS TO FACILITATE THE MOVEMENT OF TROOPS TO THE CHINESE BORDER IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES, A VIEW WHICH HE SAID HE HAD PROBABLY DEVELOPED AFTER LISTENING TO OFFICERS DISCUSS THE RAILROAD.)

4. [REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED]

REPORT CLASS

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